

One Oyster's Solution to the Drill Problem

BY

V. G. BURRELL, Jr.

Marine Resources Research Institute, P. O. Box 12559, Charleston, South Carolina 29412

(1 Plate)

AN AMERICAN OYSTER, *Crassostrea virginica* (Gmelin, 1791) may have solved for itself the oyster drill problem. This bivalve captured a thick lipped drill, *Eupleura caudata* (Say, 1822) by apparently closing its valves on the snail's proboscis which was inserted through a hole drilled in the margin of the oyster shell (Figure 1). The oyster apparently then held its enemy until the drill expired. Shell material was deposited around the snail permanently affixing it to the oyster's upper valve (Figure 2). We do not know whether or not this served as a warning to other drills with predatory designs on our hero. This prodigious feat came to light during an examination of a dredge sample of oysters from Cape Romain, South Carolina.

Explanation of Figures 1, 2

Figure 1: The oyster showing drill attached

Figure 2: The inside of the oyster shell showing growth of shell material around the captive drill